

# FROM CHALLENGED BEGINNINGS TO STANDING TALL

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## The relentless efforts and achievements of our farmers



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Covid-19 has repeatedly raised the question of human survival on earth. It also brought to the fore the issues of food production, storage and agricultural skills. But as much as we don't like to get our hopes up, there are many reasons to be hopeful still. Needless to say, agriculture is the sector from which our greatest hope emerges. People have become much more patient even in the midst of anxiety. The government has also played an important role in the farming sector. Over the last eight months, I have presented television reports where I found educated young farmers and entrepreneurs achieve unimaginable success—an astonishing variety of fruit crops being grown, and a major shift in agriculture.

I have always judged the prosperity of the country predominantly through agriculture. When I see a farmer smiling, I believe that the situation in the country hasn't deteriorated much. Again, when I see the farmer plunged into crisis, I think the country seems to be facing a hard time. I also saw some agricultural entrepreneurs play a significant role in taking the country forward. Shahrir Kabir Sajal, a young entrepreneur from Panchagarh, is seeing great financial improvement, worth crores of taka, with his huge biofloc project. Nahid Al Sumon, a young entrepreneur from Mirpur, Kushtia, built a farm with 2,000 ducks during this coronavirus pandemic. Syed Ferdous Murad, a young entrepreneur in Natore, has started a state-of-the-art fish farm in 20 ponds on a 20-acre space. Rafiqul has become famous



all over the country by showing the wonderful yield of Baromashi (year-long) mango. Mohammad Solaiman, a retired army officer in Sonagazi, Feni, has shown extraordinary determination to change the face of the country's agricultural economy from a huge 70-acre integrated agro farm. Shahida Begum, an onion seed farmer from Faridpur, who has sold seeds worth Tk 4 crore (USD 473,000) this year, says she wants to continue her hard work to make the country self-sufficient in onions. Chuadanga malta garden entrepreneur Sakhawat Hossain Babul

has spread sweet malta gardens all over the country. Kohinoor Kamal, a woman entrepreneur from Chittagong, has ensured supply of healthy fingerlings among fish farmers in 12 districts through her hatchery initiative. Ershad Mahmud, another entrepreneur from Chittagong, has set a precedent of remarkable accomplishments in raising and expanding the rare Goyal cow breed. His dream is to bring Goyal to an important place in the country's livestock resources. Rakibul Islam Tutul, a young entrepreneur, runs a smart dairy farm of 12 hundred cows in

Chittagong's Mirsarai.

Successful entrepreneurs are setting an example of success with great and modern agricultural initiatives. Throwing away the dream of earning money abroad, many young people have returned to the country and built their own agricultural farm. Their one-year earning is equal to 10 years of what they would have earned working abroad. These people are turning the wheel of food security in the country. Agriculture continues to strengthen the foundation of the economy, ensuring the employment of countless people. It

really has kept our dreams alive.

The first thing we consider in the place of agricultural economy and policy planning is GDP. The contribution of agriculture to GDP is declining. In the last financial year, the contribution of agriculture to GDP was 13.35 percent. Agriculture is now associated with many sectors including industry and services and is playing a unique role in the economy of Bangladesh.

Considering my four decades of journalistic journey in the development sector (especially the farming sector), it would not be wrong to say that at present, the farming sector is going through one of the most diverse and best times I have personally witnessed. As a result, we are seeing unimaginable abundance in crops. Our success in the production of all food grains, vegetables, fruits, rice, fish, meat, eggs and milk is exemplary. Overcoming many adversities, our farmers have achieved great success in production.

These are the outcomes of free market economy and globalisation. Similarly, there are individual initiatives of the farmer. By cultivating high value fruit crops, farmers are able to achieve commercial success on their own. On the other hand, the multi-faceted activities of the Ministry of Agriculture are being conducted for crop diversification. Above all, the individual initiatives of the farmers are being considered very promising in the field of commercial agriculture.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Global Food Security and

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